

The University Musical Society

of

The University of Michigan

Presents

The Early Music Consort of London

Directed by DAVID MUNROW

JAMES BOWMAN—*counter tenor, tenor viol, tabor, mediaeval trumpet*

OLIVER BROOKES—*crwth, bass viol, crumhorn, recorder*

JAMES TYLER—*citole, lute, tenor viol, crumhorn, recorder, tambourine*

CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD—*harp, percussion, harpsichord, crumhorn*

DAVID MUNROW—*bagpipes, recorder, gemshorn, kortholt, crumhorn, dulcian, cornemuse, six-holed pipe, shawm*

(The instruments are listed in the order in which they are played.)

Music for Princes and Peasants

A program exploring the contrasts between courtly and popular elements in mediaeval and Renaissance music.

SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 13, 1974, AT 8:30

RACKHAM AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

P R O G R A M

Peasants

<i>Saltarello</i>	. . . . .	Fourteenth century Italian
<i>English dance</i>	. . . . .	Thirteenth century
<i>Estampie</i>	. . . . .	Thirteenth century French
<i>Dance tune</i>	. . . . .	attrib. Tassin, thirteenth century
<i>“Ich spring an diesem Ringe”</i>	}	Locheimer Liederbuch, fifteenth century German
<i>“Ach Meiden, du viel sehndend Pein”</i>		
<i>“Es fuhr ein Bauer”</i>		

The audience is requested to reserve their applause for the end of each section.

The princely elements in early music are easier to isolate than the popular ones. Especially in mediaeval times the music of the lower classes of society was a mixture of oral tradition, memory and improvisation, just as it is today in countries such as Turkey, Greece or the Balkans. The folk musicians of these countries are generally virtuoso performers and much can be learnt from them. Mediaeval dance music was essentially a solo business. An itinerant *jongleur* or *ménéstrel* had to be able to give a convincing solo act: the best instruments for the purpose were those which provided their own drone accompaniment. Popular songs, too, were monophonic but, if we are to judge by surviving folk music practise, benefited from the addition of drones, percussion and instrumental interludes.

The *Locheimer Liederbuch* is a rich and diverse collection. Although we owe its existence to the developing (and literate) middle class, the songs themselves reflect a close preoccupation with rustic life. This is not the stylised Arcadia of the renaissance, but the often harsh reality of gleaning a living from the soil.

“Ich spring an diesem ringe” is a dance song in which the singer, as an old man, remembers all the pretty girls he has met on his travels. He recalls their virtue, or lack of it, and finally consoles himself with a bottle of wine. “Ach Meiden” is a young man’s complaint to one particular girl who has ill-treated him: she has imprisoned his heart forever. “Es fuhr ein Bauer” is short and to the point: ‘A peasant set off for the woods with the axe, then came the crafty priest to his wife.’ No further translation is required.

Princes and Peasants

<i>Bransle Gay</i>	. . . . .	publ. Claude Gervaise sixteenth century
<i>Bransle de Poictou</i>	. . . . .	publ. Pierre Attaignant (died 1552)
<i>Bransle Courans</i>	. . . . .	Claude Gervaise
<i>Bransle d’Ecosse</i>	. . . . .	Claude Gervaise
<i>Bransle de Champagne</i>	. . . . .	Pierre Attaignant
<i>Bransle Simple</i>	. . . . .	Claude Gervaise

This is a “suite de branles,” drawn from editions by two French publishers who helped to spread the popularity of renaissance dance music by making it readily available: in solo arrangements for lute or keyboard and in consort versions sold in individual part books. Dances were grouped together according to type and performers could make their own selection. The tunes themselves must often have been popular in origin: they belong to a common stock shared by most European countries.

The branle was originally a folk dance: Joan of Arc might have danced it as a country girl in Lorraine in the fifteenth century. By the sixteenth century it was a court dance executed so brilliantly by Marguerite de Valois at the court of Paris that the governor of the Low Countries rode post haste to Paris to see her dance it. Some of our performing versions try to illustrate this transition from country to court.

Princes

“ <i>Vergine bella</i>”	. . . . .	Guillaume Dufay (c. 1400–1474)
<i>Je porte amyablement</i>	. . . . .	Donato da Firenze (floreant c. 1350)
<i>De tout bien plaine</i>	. . . . .	Hayne van Ghiseghem (fifteenth century)
“ <i>Ti partir cor mio caro</i>”	. . . . .	Filippo Azzaiolo (sixteenth century)
<i>De che le morta la mia signora</i>	. . . . .	Anonymous (early sixteenth century)
“ <i>Virgine Bella</i>”	. . . . .	Bartolomeo Tromboncino (died c. 1535)

The humanistic spirit of the renaissance is perfectly expressed in the poems of Francesco Petrarca, or Petrarch, born in 1304. He was a poet, an intellectual, a sceptic, and an antiquarian. He combined passion with reason and love with scholarship. His thirst for knowledge stimulated many others to the critical study of classical texts, and he has been truly called “the first modern literary man.” Petrarch’s poetry inspired countless musical settings, not only by his contemporaries in fourteenth century Florence but by succeeding generations of European composers, including the late sixteenth century madrigalists.

This group begins and ends with settings of the first stanza of Petrarch’s great poem “Vergine Bella”:

“Beautiful Virgin clothed in the sun’s rays, crowned with stars, you so pleased God that He hid His light in you; Love impells me to write in praise of you but I cannot begin without your help, and the help of Him who in love took His place in you. I invoke you, who always replied to the faithful supplicant. Virgin, if ever the extreme misery of the human state moved you to pity, give ear to my prayer and help in my difficulty, even though I am on earth and you are Queen of Heaven.”

Both Dufay and Tromboncino responded to this text with a carefully worked, through-composed song. The other pieces in the group illustrate some of the courtly *formes fixes*: “Je porte amyablement” is a virelai, “De tout bien plaine” a rondeau, “Ti partir,” a frottola whilst “De che le morta” has the repeated sections typical of early keyboard music.

INTERMISSION

Princes and Peasants

“So trinken wir alle”	Arnold von Bruck (c. 1470–1554)
<i>Der Pfauen Schwanz</i>	<i>Glogauer Liederbuch</i> (fifteenth century)
<i>Ein gutter Polnischer danncz</i>	Anonymous (sixteenth century)
<i>Der Neue Bauernschwanz</i>	<i>Glogauer Liederbuch</i>
<i>Ungarescha</i>	Anonymous (sixteenth century)
“Ich sachs eins mals”	<i>Glogauer Liederbuch</i>

When the art of the troubadours had died out elsewhere, the Meistersingers helped to preserve the mediaeval tradition of solo song in Germany right up to the end of the sixteenth century. The most famous Meistersinger was Hans Sachs (1494–1576) with over 6,000 songs to his credit. He of course, was neither a prince nor a peasant but an honest middle class citizen and it was in his part of society that the most of the significant developments in German music had taken place during the fifteenth century.

The *Glogauer Liederbuch* is a substantial collection of songs and instrumental pieces probably compiled c. 1477–1488. The designation “social songs” indicates their suitability for amateur music making amongst tradespeople and the professional classes. Although this and similar collections laid the foundations of the German *tenor lied* (“So trinken wir alle” for example) which was to become the typical German court song of the Emperor Maximilian’s time, the subject matter of the *Glogauer* pieces is still not particularly elevated. The roots of peasant life are still there as in *Der Neue Bauernschwanz* for example (the New Peasant round dance).

There is a strong national folk influence in the two keyboard solos. The exotic “Ungarescha” is a real folk tune still heard in Hungary today. In the sixteenth century it was a strenuous sword dance demonstrated by the lyric poet Valentin Balassi at the Imperial court in 1572.

The last song in the group occurs in several different versions in the *Glogauer* book, both monophonic and polyphonic. Five versions are used in this evening’s performance. “Ich sachs eins mals” is a descendant of the courtly aubade of the troubadours. It says: “Once I saw the bright morning star with my love, as I should like to be always. But alas! this cannot be.”

Princes

“ <i>Quei che sempre han da penare</i> ”	Marco Cara
“ <i>Quasi sempre avanti di</i> ”	Bartolomeo Tromboncino
<i>Per dolor mi bagno el viso</i>	Marco Cara
“ <i>Se mai per maraveglia</i> ”	Franciscus Bossinensis (early sixteenth century)
“ <i>Chi passa per questa strada</i> ”	Anonymous, (early sixteenth century)

Isabella d’Este must rank as one the greatest female patrons of the arts. After her marriage to the Marchese Francesco Gonzaga in 1490, her court at Mantua became internationally famous as a musical centre, no small achievement at a time when Italy might justly have been called “the land without music.” Isabella assiduously cultivated young Italian poets and composers to rival those at other European courts. Instead of imitating the French chanson they developed the frottola, a vigorous new form with its roots in the gaiety of the Italian language and people. Isabella sometimes took part in the concerts she organised at Mantua as a clavichord player: two of the regular performers were Marco Cara and Bartolomeo Tromboncino, both singers and lutenists.

The group begins with three frottolas: all with typically light-hearted texts about love. “Quasi sempre avanti di” contains some charming bird imitations: “Almost always before dawn the cock sings ‘cu cu ru ru’—and I go to my love.” “Per dolor mi bagno el viso” is heard in a keyboard intabulation by Andrea Antico. The last two songs are variants of the frottola type. “Se mai per maraveglia” is a *capitolo*: its serious devotional text is unusual and its recitative style unique for the period: “If ever through astonishment, as you raise your countenance to the bright sky, Do you think O blind people, of that true Lord of a Paradise? Weep the universal grief, weep the harsh death and bitter trial, if any spirit of pity pierces your heart.”

“Chi passa” belongs to the more popular *villota* type. Its strong rhythms and simple harmonies make it an ideal basis for improvisation: “Fortunate he who passes through this street, Happy is he if he sings fa la li le la.”

Peasants

<i>Instrumental melody</i>	Thirteenth century French
<i>Dance tune</i>	Fourteenth century German
<i>"Le roi a fait battre tambour"</i>	Traditional French
<i>Saltarello</i>	Fourteenth century Italian

The programme ends as it began, with music of the people. The King and Queen in the ballad "Le roi a fait battre tambour" are not real personages, but the king and queen of fairy tales and folklore. The song describes how the king covets the wife of one of his courtiers: but the queen has the last word by poisoning her rival.

The idea of the instrumentation for the final Saltarello came from seeing a wedding procession in Marrakesh: a melody, not unlike this mediaeval saltarello, was played on the shawm accompanied by a variety of drones and percussion. The musicians walked in front, behind them came all the guests and several carts laden with wedding gifts, and at the back came the most valuable present of all—a cow. As the procession passed, time seemed to stand still. Neither the sight nor the sound could have changed much in the last 1,000 years.

Notes by DAVID MUNROW

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CONCENTUS MUSICUS, from Vienna	Wednesday, October 9
Music and instruments from the Baroque period.	
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Using instruments of Haydn's time.	
CLEVELAND STRING QUARTET	Wednesday, November 13
JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET	Tuesday, December 3
SYNTAGMA MUSICUM, from Amsterdam	Thursday, January 23
Medieval and Renaissance songs and music.	
TOKYO STRING QUARTET	Sunday, 2:30, February 2
Quartet-in-residence at American University.	
JEAN-PIERRE RAMPAL, <i>flutist</i> ; VEYRON LACROIX, <i>keyboard</i>	Tuesday, February 18
ARS ANTIQUA DE PARIS	Saturday, March 29
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UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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